SALMAGUNDI;

OR, THE

WHIM-WHAMS AND OPINIONS

OF

LAUNCELOT LANGSTAFF, ESQ.

AND OTHERS.

In hoc est hoax, cum quiz et jokesez,
Et smokem, toastem, roastem folksez,
Fee, faw, fum. *Psalmanazar.*

With baked, and broiled, and stewed, and toasted,
And fried, and boiled, and smoked, and roasted,
We treat the town.

NO. 19] *Thursday Dec* 31 1807 [NO 9 OF VOL. 2.

FROM MY ELBOW CHAIR.

Having returned to town, and once more formally taken possession of my elbow chair, it behoves me to discard the rural feelings, and the rural sentiments, in which I have for some time past indulged, and devote myself more exclusively to the edification of the town. As I feel at this moment a chivalrick spark of gallantry playing around my heart, and one of those dulcet emotions of cordiality, which an old bachelor will sometimes entertain toward the divine sex, I am determined to gratify the sentiment for once, and devote this number exclusively to the ladies. I would not, however, have our fair readers imagine that we wish to flatter ourselves into their good graces; devoutly as we adore them, (and what true cavalier does not) and heartily as we desire to flourish in the mild sunshine of their smiles, yet we scorn to insinuate ourselves into their favour; unless it be as honest friends, sincere well wishers, and disinter-

ested advisers. If in the course of this number they find us rather prodigal of our encomiums, they will have the modesty to ascribe it to the excess of their own merits—if they find us extremely indulgent to their faults, they will impute it rather to the superabundance of our good nature, than to any servile and illiberal fear of giving offence.

The following letter of Mustapha falls in exactly with the current of my purpose. As I have before mentioned, that his letters are without dates, we are obliged to give them very irregularly, without any regard to chronological order.

The present one, appears to have been written not long after his arrival, and antecedent to several already published. It is more in the familiar and colloquial style than the others. Will Wizard declares he has translated it with fidelity, excepting that he has omitted several remarks on the *waltz*, which the honest Mussulman eulogizes with great enthusiasm; comparing it to certain voluptuous dances of the seraglio. Will regretted exceedingly that the indelicacy of several of these observations compelled their total exclusion, as he wishes to give all possible encouragement to this popular and amiable exhibition.

LETTER

FROM MUSTAPHA RUB-A-DUB KELI KHAN,

to MULEY HELIM AL RAGGI, (*surnamed the agreeable Ragamuffin*) *chief mountebank and buffa-dancer to his highness.*

The numerous letters which I have written to our friend the *slave driver*, as well as those to thy

kinsman THE SNORER, and which doubtless were read to thee, honest Muley, have in all probability awakened thy curiosity to know further particulars concerning the manners of the barbarians, who hold me in such ignominious captivity. I was lately at one of their publick ceremonies, which at first perplexed me exceedingly as to its object; but as the explanations of a friend have let me somewhat into the secret, and as it seems to bear no small analogy to thy profession, a description of it may contribute to thy amusement, if not to thy instruction.

A few days since, just as I had finished my coffee, and was perfuming my whiskers preparatory to a morning walk. I was waited upon by an inhabitant of this place, a gay young infidel, who has of late cultivated my acquaintance. He presented me with a square bit of painted pasteboard, which he informed me would entitle me to admittance to the CITY ASSEMBLY. Curious to know the meaning of a phrase, which was entirely new to me, I requested an explanation; when my friend informed me that the assembly was a numerous concourse of young people of both sexes, who, on certain occasions, gathered together to dance about a large room with violent gesticulation, and try to out-dress each other.——"In short," said he, "if you wish to see *the natives* in all their glory, there's no place like the *City Assembly*; so you must go there, and sport your whiskers."——Though the matter of *sporting my whiskers*, was considerably above my apprehension, yet I now began, as I thought, to understand him. I had heard of the war dances of the natives, which are a kind of religious institution,

and had little doubt but that this must be a solemnity of the kind—upon a prodigious great scale. Anxious as I am to contemplate these strange people in every situation, I willingly acceeded to his proposal, and to be the more at ease, I determined to lay aside my turkish dress, and appear in plain garments of the fashion of this country—as is my custom whenever I wish to mingle in a crowd, without exciting the attention of the gaping multitude.

It was long after the shades of night had fallen, before my friend appeared to conduct me to the assembly. "These infidels," thought I, "shroud themselves in mystery, and seek the aid of gloom and darkness to heighten the solemnity of their pious orgies." Resolving to conduct myself with that decent respect, which every stranger owes to the customs of the land in which he sojourns, I chastised my features into an expression of sober reverence, and stretched my face into a degree of longitude suitable to the ceremony I was about to witness. Spite of myself, I felt an emotion of awe stealing over my senses as I approached the majestick pile. My imagination pictured something similar to a descent into the cave of Dom-Daniel, where the necromancers of the east are taught their infernal arts. I entered with the same gravity of demeanour that I would have approached the holy Temple at Mecca, and bowed my head three times, as I passed the threshold. "Head of the mighty Amrou!" thought I, on being ushered into a splendid saloon, "what a display is here! surely I am transported to the mansions of the Houris, the elysium of the faithful!"——How tame appeared all the descriptions of enchanted

palaces in our arabian poetry!—wherever I turned my eyes, the quick glances of beauty dazzled my vision and ravished my heart—lovely virgins fluttered by me, darting imperial looks of conquest, or beaming such smiles of invitation, as did Gabriel when he beckoned our holy prophet to heaven. Shall I own the weakness of thy friend good Muley?—while thus gazing on the enchanted scene before me, I for a moment forgot my country; and even the memory of my three-and-twenty wives faded from my heart---my thoughts were bewildered and led astray by the charms of these bewitching savages, and I sunk for awhile into that delicious state of mind where the senses, all enchanted, and, all striving for mastery, produce an endless variety of tumultuous, yet pleasing emotions. Oh, Muley, never shall I again wonder that an infidel should prove a recreant to the single solitary wife allotted him, when even thy friend, armed with all the precepts of Mahomet, can so easily prove faithless to three-and-twenty!

"Whither have you led me?" said I at length to my companion, "and to whom do these beautiful creatures belong? certainly this must be the seraglio of the grand bashaw of the city, and a most happy bashaw must he be to possess treasures which even his highness of Tripoli cannot parallel." "Have a care," cried my companion, "how you talk about seraglioes, or you'll have all these gentle nymphs about your ears; for seraglio is a word which, beyond all others, they abhor;---most of them," continued he, "have no lord and master, but come here to catch one---they're *in the market*, as we term it."——"Ah, hah!" said I, exultingly, "then you really have a fair, or slave-market, such

as we have in the east, where the faithful are provided with the choicest virgins of Georgia and Circassia?——by our glorious sun of Africk, but I should like to select some ten or a dozen wives from so lovely an assemblage! pray, what would you suppose they might be bought for?"——

Before I could receive an answer, my attention was attracted by two or three good looking middle sized men, who being dressed in black, a colour universally worn in this country by the muftis and dervises, I immediately concluded to be high priests, and was confirmed in my original opinion that this was a religious ceremony. These reverend personages are entitled *managers*, and enjoy unlimited authority in the assemblies, being armed with swords, with which I am told they would infallibly put any lady to death, who infringed the laws of the temple. They walked round the room with great solemnity, and with an air of profound importance and mystery put a little piece of folded paper in each fair hand, which I concluded were religious talismans. One of them dropped on the floor, whereupon I slily put my foot on it, and watching an opportunity, picked it up unobserved and found it to contain some unintelligible words and the mystic number 9. What were its virtues I know not, except that I put it in my pocket, and have hitherto been preserved from my fit of the lumbago, which I generally have about this season of the year, ever since I tumbled into the well of Zim-zim on my pilgrimage to Mecca. I enclose it to thee in this letter, presuming it to be particularly serviceable against the dangers of thy profession.

Shortly after the distribution of these talismans

one of the high priests stalked into the middle of the room with great majesty, and clapped his hands three times; a loud explosion of musick succeeded from a number of black, yellow and white musicians perched in a kind of cage over the grand entrance. The company were thereupon thrown into great confusion and apparent consternation. They hurried to and fro about the room, and at length formed themselves into little groupes of eight persons, half male and half female---the musick struck into something like harmony, and in a moment to my utter astonishment and dismay, they were all seized with what I concluded to be a paroxysm of religious phrenzy, tossing about their heads in a ludicrous style from side to side and indulging in extravagant contortions of figure—now throwing their heels into the air, and anon whirling round with the velocity of the eastern idolators, who think they pay a grateful homage to the sun by imitating his motions. I expected every moment to see them fall down in convulsions, foam at the mouth, and shriek with fancied inspiration. As usual the females seemed most fervent in their religious exercises, and performed them with a melancholy expression of feature that was peculiarly touching; but I was highly gratified by the exemplary conduct of several male devotees, who, though their gesticulations would intimate a wild merriment of the feelings, maintained throughout as inflexible a gravity of countenance as so many monkeys of the island of Borneo at their anticks.

"And pray", said I, "who is the divinity that presides in this splendid mosque?"——"The divinity!—oh, I understand—you mean the *belle*

of the evening; we have a new one every season: the one at present in fashion is that lady you see yonder, dressed in white, with pink ribbons, and a crowd of adorers around her." "Truly," cried I, "this is the pleasantest deity I have encountered in the whole course of my travels—so familiar, so condescending, and so merry withal—why, her very worshippers take her by the hand, and whisper in her ear."——"My good mussulman," replied my friend with great gravity, "I perceive you are completely in an error concerning the intent of this ceremony. You are now in a place of publick amusement, not of publick worship—and the pretty looking young men you see making such violent and grotesque distortions, are merely indulging in our favourite amusement of dancing." "I cry you mercy," exclaimed I, "these then are the dancing men and women of the town, such as we have in our principal cities, who hire themselves out for the entertainment of the wealthy—but, pray who pays them for this fatiguing exhibition?"——My friend regarded me for a moment with an air of whimsical perplexity, as if doubtful whether I was in jest or earnest.—— "'Sblood, man," cried he, "these are some of our greatest people, our fashionables, who are merely dancing here for amusement.'——*Dancing for amusement!*—think of that, Muley—thou, whose greatest pleasure is to chew opium, smoke tobacco, loll on a couch, and doze thyself into the region of the Houris!——*Dancing for amusement!*—shall I never cease having occasion to laugh at the absurdities of these barbarians, who are laborious in their recreations, and indolent only in their hours of business?——*Dancing for amusement!*—

the very idea makes my bones ache, and I never think of it without being obliged to apply my handkerchief to my forehead, and fan myself into some degree of coolness.

"And pray," said I, when my astonishment had a little subsided, "do these musicians also toil for amusement, or are they confined to their cage, like birds, to sing for the gratification of others?—I should think the former was the case, from the animation with which they flourish their elbows." "Not so," replied my friend, "they are well paid, which is no more than just, for I assure you they are the most important personages in the room. The fiddler puts the whole assembly in motion, and directs their movements, like the master of a puppet-show, who sets all his pasteboard gentry kicking by a jerk of his fingers:——there now—look at that dapper little gentleman yonder, who appears to be suffering the pangs of dislocation in every limb—he is the most expert puppet in the room, and performs, not so much for his own amusement, as for that of the bye-standers."—— Just then, the little gentleman, having finished one of his paroxysms of activity, seemed to be looking round for applause from the spectators. Feeling myself really much obliged to him for his exertions, I made him a low bow of thanks, but nobody followed my example, which I thought a singular instance of ingratitude.

Thou wilt perceive, friend Muley, that the dancing of these barbarians is totally different from the *science* professed by thee in Tripoli;—the country, in fact, is afflicted by numerous epidemical diseases, which travel from house to house, from city to city, with the regularity of a caravan. Among these,

the most formidable is this dancing mania, which prevails chiefly throughout the winter. It at first seized on a few people of fashion, and being indulged in moderation, was a cheerful exercise; but in a little time, by quick advances, it infected all classes of the community, and became a raging epidemick. The doctors immediately, as is their usual way, instead of devising a remedy, fell together by the ears, to decide whether it was native or imported, and the stickle:s for the latter opinion traced it to a cargo of trumpery from France, as they had before hunted down the yellow-fever to a bag of coffee from the West-Indies. What makes this disease the more formidable, is that the patients seem infatuated with their malady, abandon themselves to its unbounded ravages, and expose their persons to wintry storms and midnight airs, more fatal in this capricious climate than the withering Simoom blast of the desart.

I know not whether it is a sight most whimsical or melancholy to witness a fit of this dancing malady. The lady hops up to the gentleman, who stands at the distance of about three paces, and then capers back again to her place—the gentleman of course does the same—then they skip one way, then they jump another—then they turn their backs to each other—then they seize each other and shake hands—then they whirl round, and throw themselves into a thousand grotesque and ridiculous attitudes—sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, and sometimes on no leg at all—and this they call *exhibiting the graces!*—— By the nineteen thousand capers of the great mountebank of Damascus, but these *graces* must be something like the crooked backed dwarf

Shabrac, who is sometimes permitted to amuse his highness by imitating the tricks of a monkey. These fits continue at short intervals from four to five hours, till at last the lady is led off, faint, languid, exhausted, and panting, to her carriage—rattles home—passes a night of feverish restlessness, cold perspirations and troubled sleep—rises late next morning (if she rises at all) is nervous, petulant, or a prey to languid indifference all day—a mere household spectre, neither giving nor receiving enjoyment—in the evening hurries to another dance—receives an unnatural exhiliration from the lights, the musick, the crowd, and the unmeaning bustle—flutters, sparkles, and blooms for awhile, until, the transient delirium being past, the infatuated maid droops and languishes into apathy again—is again led off to her carriage, and the next morning rises to go through exactly the same joyless routine.

And yet, wilt thou believe it, my dear Raggi, these are rational beings ; nay, more, their countrymen would fain persuade me they have souls! —Is it not a thousand times to be lamented that beings, endowed with charms that might warm even the frigid heart of a dervise—with social and endearing powers, that would render them the joy and pride of the haram—should surrender themselves to a habit of heartless dissipation, which preys imperceptibly on the roses of the cheek—which robs the eye of its lustre, the mouth of its dimpled smile, the spirits of their cheerful hilarity, and the limbs of their elastick vigour—which hurries them off in the spring-time of existence ; or, if they survive, yields to the arms of a youthful bridegroom a frame wrecked in the

storms of dissipation, and struggling with premature infirmity. Alas, Muley! may I not ascribe to this cause the number of little old women I meet with in this country, from the age of eighteen to eight-and-twenty?

In sauntering down the room, my attention was attracted by a smoky painting, which on nearer examination I found consisted of two female figures crowning a bust with a wreath of laurel. "This, I suppose," cried I, "was some famous dancer in his time?"——"Oh, no," replied my friend, "he was *only* a general."——"Good; but then he must have been great at a cotillion, or expert at a fiddle-stick—or why is his memorial here?"——"Quite the contrary," answered my companion, "history makes no mention of his ever having flourished a fiddle-stick, or figured in a single dance. You have, no doubt, heard of him—he was the illustrious WASHINGTON, the father and deliverer of his country; and as our nation is remarkable for gratitude to great men, it always does honour to their memory, by placing their monuments over the doors of taverns or in the corners of dancing-rooms."

From thence my friend and I strolled into a small apartment adjoining the grand saloon, where I beheld a number of grave looking persons with venerable grey heads, (but without beards, which I thought very unbecoming) seated around a table, studying hieroglyphicks;—I approached them with reverence, as so many *magi*, or learned men, endeavouring to expound the mysteries of egyptian science: several of them threw down money, which I supposed was a reward proposed for some great discovery, when presently one of them

spread his hieroglyphicks on the table, exclaimed triumphantly "two bullets and a bragger!' and swept all the money into his pocket. He has discovered a key to the hieroglyphicks, thought I—happy mortal! no doubt his name will be immortalized. Willing, however, to be satisfied, I looked round on my companion with an inquiring eye—he understood me, and informed me that these were a company of *friends*, who had met together to win each other's money, and be agreeable. "Is that all?' exclaimed I, "why then, I pray you, make way, and let me escape from this temple of abominations, or who knows but these people, who meet together to toil, worry and fatigue themselves to death, and give it the name of pleasure—and who win each others money by way of being agreeable—may some one of them take a liking to me, and pick my pocket, or break my head in a paroxysm of hearty good-will!"

thy friend.

MUSTAPHA.

BY ANTHONY EVERGREEN, GENT.

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
Pulsanda tellus. HOR.

Now is the tyme for wine and myrtheful sportes,
For daunce, and song, and disportes of syche sortes.
LINK FID.

The winter campaign has opened. Fashion has summoned her numerous legions at the sound of trumpet, tamborine and drum, and all the harmonious minstrelsy of the orchestra, to hasten

from the dull, silent, and insipid glades and groves, where they have vegetated during the summer, recovering from the ravages of the last winter's campaign. Our fair ones have hurried to town eager to pay their devotions to this tutelary deity, and to make an offering at her shrine of the few pale and transient roses they gathered in their healthful retreat. The fiddler rosins his bow, the card-table devotee is shuffling her pack, the young ladies are industriously spangling muslins, and the tea-party heroes are airing their *chapeaux bras* and pease-blossom breeches, to prepare for figuring in the gay circle of smiles, and graces, and beauty. Now the fine lady forgets her country friends in the hurry of fashionable engagements, or receives the simple intruder who has foolishly accepted her thousand pressing invitations, with such *politeness* that the poor soul determines never to come again—now the gay buck who erst figured at Baliston and quaffed the pure spring, exchanges the sparkling water for still more sparkling champaign, and deserts the *nymph* of the fountain, to enlist under the standard of jolly Bacchus. In short, now is the important time of the year in which to harangue the bon-ton reader, and like some ancient hero in front of the battle, to spirit him up to deeds of noble daring, or still more noble suffering, in the ranks of fashionable warfare.

Such, indeed, has been my intention; but the number of cases which have lately come before me, and the variety of complaints I have received from a crowd of honest and well-meaning correspondents, call for more immediate attention. A host of appeals, petitions, and letters of advice are now before me; and I believe the

shortest way to satisfy my petitioners, memorialists, and advisers will be to publish their letters, as I suspect the object of most of them is merely to get into print.

TO ANTHONY EVERGREEN, GENT.

SIR,

As you appear to have taken to yourself the trouble of meddling in the concerns of the beau monde, I take the liberty of appealing to you on a subject, which though considered merely as a very good joke, has occasioned me great vexation and expense. You must know I pride myself on being very *useful* to the ladies; that is, I take boxes for them at the theatre, go shopping with them, supply them with boquets and furnish them with novels from the circulating library. In consequence of these attentions I am become a great favourite, and there is seldom a party going on in the city without my having an invitation. The grievance I have to mention, is the exchange of hats which takes place on these occasions; for, to speak my mind freely, there are certain young gentlemen who seem to consider fashionable parties as mere places to barter old clothes; and I am informed that a number of them manage by this great system of exchange to keep their crowns decently covered without their hatter *suffering* in the least by it.

It was but lately that I went to a private ball with a new hat, and on returning in the latter part of the evening, and asking for it the scoundrel of a servant, with a broad grin inform-

ed me, that the new hats had been dealt out half an hour since, and they were then on the third quality; and I was in the end obliged to borrow a young lady's beaver rather than go home with any of the ragged remnants that were left.

Now I would wish to know, if there is no possibility of having these offenders punished by law—and whether it would not be advisable for ladies to mention in their card of invitation, as a postscript, "stealing hats and shawls positively prohibited." At any rate, I would thank you mr. Evergreen, to discountenance the thing totally by publishing in your paper, that *stealing a hat is no joke*.

Your humble servant,

WALTER WITHERS.

My correspondent is informed that the police have determined to take this matter into consideration, and have set apart Saturday mornings for the cognizance of *fashionable larcenies*.

MR. EVERGREEN,

SIR,

Do you think a married woman may lawfully put her husband right in a story, before strangers, when she knows him to be in the wrong, and can any thing authorize a wife in the exclamation of—"lord, my dear, how can you say so!"

MARGARET TIMSON.

DEAR ANTHONY,

Going down Broadway this morning in a great hurry I ran full against an object which at first

put me to a prodigious non plus. Observing it to be dressed in a man's hat, a cloth overcoat, and spatterdashes, I framed my apology accordingly, exclaiming "my dear *sir*, I ask ten thousand pardons—I assure you, *sir*, it was entirely accidental —pray excuse me *sir*, &c." At every one of these excuses, the thing answered me with a downright laugh; at which, I was not a little surprised until, on resorting to my pocket glass I discovered that it was no other than my old acquaintance Clarinda Trollop—I never was more chagrined in my life, for being an old bachelor I like to appear as young as possible, and am always boasting of the goodness of my eyes. I beg of you, mr. Evergreen, if you have any feeling for your cotemporaries, to discourage this hermaphrodite mode of dress; for really, if the fashion take, we poor bachelors will be utterly at a loss to distinguish a woman from a man Pray let me know your opinion, sir, whether a lady who wears a man's hat and spatterdashes before marriage, may not be apt to usurp some other article of his dress afterwards.

Your humble servant,

RODERICK WORRY.

DEAR MR. EVERGREEN,

The other night, at Richard the Third, I sat behind three gentlemen, who talked very loud on the subject of Richard's wooing Lady Ann directly in the face of his crimes against that lady. One of them declared such an unnatural scene would be hooted at in China. Pray, sir, was that mr. Wizard?

SELINA BADGER.

P. S. The gentleman I allude to, had a pocket

glass, and wore his hair fastened behind by a tortoise shell comb, with two teeth wanting.

MR. EVERGRIN,

SIR,

Being a little curious in the affairs of the toilette, I was much interested by the sage Mustapha's remarks in your last number, concerning the art of manufacturing a modern fine lady. I would have you caution your fair readers, however, to be very careful in the management of their machinery, as a deplorable accident happened last assembly, in consequence of the architecture of a lady's figure not being sufficiently strong. In the middle of one of the cotillions the company was suddenly alarmed by a tremendous crash at the lower end of the room, and on crouding to the place, discovered that it was a fine figure which had unfortunately broken down, from too great exertion in a pigeon-wing. By great good luck I secured the *corset*, which I carried home in triumph, and the next morning had it publickly dissected and a leeture read on it at Surgeon's Hall. I have since commenced a dessertation on the subject, in which I shall treat of the superiority of those figures manufactured by steel, stay-tape and whale-bone, to those formed by dame nature. I shall show clearly that the Venus de Medicis has no pretension to beauty of form, as she never wore stays, and her waist is in exact proportion to the rest of her body. I shall inquire into the mysteries of compression, and how tight a *figure* can be laced without danger of fainting; and whether it would not be adviseable for a lady when dressing for a ball, to be attended by the family

physician, as culprits are when tortured on the rack—to know how much more nature will endure. I shall prove that ladies have discovered the secret of that notorious juggler who offered to squeeze himself into a quart bottle, and I shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of every fashionable reader, that there is a degree of heroism in purchasing a preposterously slender waist at the expense of an old age of decrepitude and rheumaticks. This dissertation shall be published as soon as finished, and distributed gratis among boarding-school madams, and all worthy matrons who are ambitious that their daughters should sit straight, move like clockwork, and "do credit to their bringing up." In the mean time, I have hung up the skeleton of the corset in the Museum, beside a dissected weazle and a stuffed alligator, where it may be inspected by all those naturalists who are fond of studying the "human form divine."

Yours, &c.

JULIAN COGNOUS.

P. S. By accurate calculation I find it is dangerous for a fine figure, when full dressed, to pronounce a word of more than three syllables. Fine figure, if in love, may indulge in a gentle sigh, but a sob is hazardous. Fine figure may smile with safety, may even venture as far as a giggle, but must never risk a loud laugh. Figure must never play the part of a *confidante*; as at a tea-party some five evenings since, a young lady whose unparallelled impalpability of waist was the envy of the drawing-room, burst with an important secret, and had three ribs [of her corset] fractured on the spot.

MR. EVERGREEN,

SIR,

I am one of those industrious gemmen who labour hard to obtain currency in the fashionable world. I have went to great expense in little boots, short vests, and long breeches—my coat is regularly imported per stage from Philadelphia, duly insured against all risks, and my boots are smuggled from Bond-street. I have lounged in Broadway with one of the most crooked walking-sticks I could procure, and have sported a pair of salmon coloured small-clothes and flame coloured stockings, at every concert and ball to which I could purchase admission. Being affeared that I might possibly appear to less advantage as a pedestrian, in consequence of my being rather short and a little bandy, I have lately hired a tall horse with cropped ears and a cocked tail, on which I have joined the cavalcade of pretty gemmen, who exhibit bright stirrups every fine morning in Broadway, and take a canter of two miles per day, at the rate of 300 dollars per annum. But, sir, all this expense has been laid out in vain, for I can scarcely get a partner at an assembly, or an invitation to a tea-party. Pray sir inform me what more I can do to acquire admission into the true stylish circles, and whether it would not be advisable to charter a curricle for a month and have my cypher put on it, as is done by certain dashers of my acquaintance.

Yours to serve,

MALVOLIO DUBSTER.

TEA,

A POEM.

FROM THE MILL OF PINDAR COCKLOFT ESQ.

and earnestly recommended to the attention of all maidens of a certain age.

Old time, my dear girls, is a knave who in truth
From the fairest of beauties will pilfer their youth;
Who by constant attention and wiley deceit
For ever is coaxing some grace to retreat;
And, like crafty seducer, with subtle approach,
The further indulged, will still further encroach.
Since this "thief of the world" has made off with your bloom,
And left you some score of stale years in its room—
Has deprived you of all those gay dreams that would dance,
In your brains at fifteen, and your bosoms entrance,
And has forced you almost to renounce in despair
The hope of a husband's affection and care—
Since such is the case, (and a case rather hard!)
Permit one who holds you in special regard,
To furnish such hints in your loveless estate
As may shelter your names from detraction and hate.
Too often our maidens grown aged, I ween,
Indulge to excess in the workings of spleen;

And at times, when annoyed by the slights of *mankind*,
Work off their resentment by *speaking their mind*:
Assemble together in snuff taking clan,
And hold round the tea-urn a solemn divan.
A convention of tattling—a *tea party* hight,
Which, like meeting of witches, is brewed up at night:
Where each matron arrives, fraught with tales of surprize,
With knowing suspicion and doubtful surmize,
Like the broomstick whirl'd hags that appear in Macbeth,
Each bearing some relick of venom or death,
"To stir up the toil and to double the trouble,
That fire may burn, and that cauldron may bubble."

When the party commences, all starched and all glum,
They talk of the weather, their corns, or sit mum:
They will tell you of cambrick, of ribbons, of lace,
How cheap they were sold—and will name you the place.
They discourse of their colds, and they hem and they cough,
And complain of their servants to pass the time off;
Or list to the tale of some doating mamma
How her ten weeks old baby will laugh and say *taa!*

But *tea*, that enlivener of wit and of soul
More loquacious by far than the draughts of the bowl,

Soon unloosens the tongue and enlivens the mind,
And enlightens their eyes to the faults of mankind.
It brings on the tapis their neighbours defects,
The faults of their friends or their wilful neglects;
Reminds them of many a good natured tale,
About those who are stylish or those who are frail,
Till the sweet tempered dames are converted by tea,
Into character manglers—*Gunaikophagi*.*

'Twas thus with the Pythia who served at the fount,
That flowed near the far famed parnassian mount:
While the steam she inhaled of the sulphuric spring,
Her vision expanded, her fancy took wing,
By its aid she pronounced the oracular will,
That Apollo commanded his sons to fulfill.
But alas! the sad vestal performing the rite
Appeared like a demon—terrifick to sight,
E'en the priests of Apollo averted their eyes,
And the temple of Delphi resounded her cries.

But quitting the nymph of the tripod of yore,
We return to the dames of the tea-pot once more.

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* I was very anxious that our friend Pindar, should give up this learned word, as being rather above the comprehension of his fair readers; but the old gentleman, according to custom, swore it was the finest point in his whole poem—so I knew it was in vain to say any more about it. W. WIZARD.

In harmless chit-chat an acquaintance they roast,
And serve up a friend, as they serve up a toast,
Some gentle *faux pas*, or some female *mistake*,
Is like sweetmeats delicious, or relished as cake;
A bit of broad scandal is like a dry crust,
It would stick in the throat, so they butter it first
With a little affected good-nature, and cry
"No body regrets the thing deeper than I."
Our young ladies nibble a good name in play
As for pastime they nibble a biscuit away:
While with shrugs and surmises, the toothless old dame,
As she mumbles a crust she will mumble a name.
And as the fell sisters astonished the scot,
In predicting of Banquo's descendants the lot,
Making shadows of kings, amid flashes of light,
To appear in array and to frown in his sight.
So they conjure up spectres all hideous in hue,
Which, as shades of their neighbours, are passed in review.

The wives of our cits of inferior degree,
Will soak up repute in a little *bohea*;
The potion is vulgar, and vulgar the slang
With which on their neighbours' defects they harangue.
But the scandal improves, (a refinement in wrong)
As our matrons are richer and rise to *souchong*.
With *hyson*—a beverage that's still more refined,
Our ladies of fashion enliven their mind,

And by nods, inuendos, and hints, and what not,
Reputations and tea send together to pot.
While madam in cambricks and laces arrayed;
With her plate and her liveries in splendid parade,
Will drink in *imperial* a friend at a sup,
Or in *gunpowder* blow them by dozens all up.
Ah me! how I groan when with full swelling sail,
Wafted stately along by the favouring gale,
A China ship proudly arrives in our bay,
Displaying her streamers and blazing away.
Oh! more fell to our port, is the cargo she bears,
Than granadoes, torpedoes, or warlike affairs:
Each chest is a bombshell thrown into our town
To shatter repute and bring characters down.

Ye Samquas, ye Chinquas, ye Chouquas, so free,
Who discharge on our coast your cursed quantums of tea,
Oh think as ye waft the sad weed from your strand,
Of the plagues and vexations ye deal to our land.
As the Upas' dread breath o'er the plain where it flies,
Empoisons and blasts each green blade that may rise,
So wherever the leaves of your shrub find their way,
The social affections soon suffer decay:
Like to Java's drear waste they embarren the heart,
Till the blossoms of love and of friendship depart.

Ah ladies, and was it by heaven designed,
That ye should be merciful, loving and kind!

Did it form you like angels, and send you below,
To prophesy peace—to bid charity flow!
And have ye thus left your primeval estate,
And wandered so widely—so strangely of late?
Alas! the sad cause I too plainly can see—
These evils have all come upon you through *tea*:
Cursed weed that can make our fair spirits resign
The character mild of their mission divine,
That can blot from their bosoms that tenderness true,
Which from female to female forever is due!
Oh how nice is the texture—how fragile the frame
Of that delicate blossom, a female's fair fame!
Tis the sensitive plant, it recoils from the breath
And shrinks from the touch as if pregnant with death.
How often, how often, has innocence sigh'd;
Has beauty been reft of its honour—its pride;
Has virtue, though pure as an angel of light,
Been painted as dark as a demon of night:
All offer'd up victims, an *auto de fe*,
At the gloomy cabals—the dark orgies of tea.

If I, in the remnant that's left me of life,
Am to suffer the torments of slanderous strife,
Let me fall I implore in the slang-whangers claw,
Where the evil is open, and subject to law.
Not nibbled and mumbled and put to the rack
By the sly underminings of tea party clack:
Condemn me, ye gods, to a newspaper roasting,
But spare me! oh spare me a tea table toasting!